

"Instead of doing the tough, unglamorous work of the House — our friends have spent most of our time on ideological quests and political games."

WASHINGTON – Congresswoman Louise Slaughter (NY-28), Ranking Member of the House Rules Committee, today spoke on the House floor regarding the Republican Continuing Resolution (CR). The legislation provides insufficient funds for disaster relief and breaks with long-standing tradition by requiring that the emergency assistance be off-set.

In part she said: **"Instead of doing the tough, unglamorous work of the House — our friends have spent most of our time on ideological quests and political games. Instead of fulfilling their pledge to uphold the Constitution, the Republican majority has worked to fulfill campaign pledges to Grover Norquist and the far right. Instead of creating jobs, our colleagues on the other side have spent months on end pushing a partisan agenda that has covered everything from the trivial to the very real dangers of default."**

Her full remarks are below. [Please click here to see the video.](#)

M. Speaker,

We stand here today because our colleagues in the Republican majority have failed. They have failed the most basic responsibility of this institution— to pass regular and routine bills to keep our government's doors open, retirement checks in the mail, and vital government services available to the American people.

In a few days, the fiscal year will end, and without a stop-gap measure, funding for essential government services will run out. Despite nine months of claims from the Republican majority that things have changed, despite a Pledge to America that promised a different Washington, and despite endless calls by the Republican Majority for a regular appropriations process, not a single appropriations bill has been enacted for the upcoming fiscal year. Not one single bill!

Throughout this failed process, the Republican Majority has blamed everyone but themselves. They have pointed fingers at President Obama, they have complained about our colleagues in the Senate, and they have blamed a Washington status quo that they say they can't control. Throughout the process, the one group of people they won't lay responsibility with is...themselves.

After 9 months with not a single bill successfully making its way through Congress, their finger pointing rings hollow. Not only has no appropriations bill been enacted, but half of the necessary appropriations bills haven't even been brought to the floor for a vote. The Republican Majority controls this body, and has used their power to pursue sideshow legislation and dangerous games of default, but they can't even schedule a vote for the most fundamental pieces of legislation that we must consider each year.

As a result, we stand here today, to vote on a billion-dollar Band-Aid that will allow us to scrape by until November. The hope is that by November, the Republican majority will be able to finally do the job they've failed to do all year. Growing up, every child hopes for such a homework extension. By the time we are elected to Congress, however, we should know that our work must be handed in on time.

Sadly, today's legislation isn't even the biggest failure of leadership that we are facing in the House. If the press reports are accurate, we may be headed for an even bigger failure in November. In recent days, reports have surfaced that the Republican Majority plans to fund the entire federal government with one massive, trillion dollar omnibus bill.

Such a bill would explicitly break a promise the Republican majority made to the American people. In their so-called Pledge To America, the Republican Leadership included a goal entitled "Advance Legislative Issues One at a Time." In the document they explained "We will end the practice of packaging unpopular bills with "must-pass" legislation to circumvent the will of the American people. Instead we will advance major legislation one issue at a time."

During a speech at the American Enterprise Institute in 2010, Speaker Boehner affirmed the need to consider appropriations legislation one bill at a time, saying he wanted to "do away with the concept of comprehensive spending bills." On the eve of assuming the majority in the House, Speaker Boehner elaborated, saying "I do not believe that having 2,000 page bills on the House floor serves anyone's best interest. Not the House, not for the members, and certainly not for the American people."

Yet if the press reports are correct, a 2,000 page bill, or more, is exactly what we will get.

Let us be clear. The prospect of an omnibus funding bill is happening for two very simple reasons:

First, our colleagues on the other side simply refuse to work in a bi-partisan manner and to make the compromises necessary to reach consensus. They continue to pass legislation that is filled with special interest favors and ideological pursuits that the American people never asked for and don't want. As a result, this legislation is built to fail, and fail it does- over and over again.

Secondly, instead of doing the tough, unglamorous work of the House — our friends have spent most of our time on ideological quests and political games. Instead of fulfilling their pledge to uphold the Constitution, the Republican majority has worked to fulfill campaign pledges to Grover Norquist and the far right. Instead of creating jobs, our colleagues on the other side have spent months on end pushing a partisan agenda that has covered everything from the trivial to the very real dangers of default.

Instead of funding the Department of Energy, the Republican Majority has tried to micromanage our light bulbs.

Instead of funding our nation's schools, they tried to eliminate Big Bird.

Instead of funding the EPA, they tried to sell the land surrounding the Grand Canyon to the state-owned mining companies of Russia and South Korea.

Instead of funding cancer research conducted by the National Institute of Health, they tried, repeatedly, to repeal health care reform.

And instead of setting a responsible budget for the next fiscal year, they brought our economy to the brink of default and led to the first-ever downgrade of our nation's credit.

Even today, our colleagues on the other side of the aisle are injecting politics into a stop-gap CR. Today we are considering legislation that will only provide disaster relief to hurricane victims if a billion dollars are taken from a successful alternative energy program that has created 39,000 jobs to date, and is poised to create 60,000 more. In effect, the other side of the aisle is telling the American people that Congress will either help rebuild shattered communities or Congress will help create new green jobs- but that we refuse to do both. This immoral approach reflects a House of Representatives that is void of responsible leadership from those in charge.

Today I'll do the little bit that I can to provide the leadership that is sorely lacking from those in charge. M. Speaker, if we defeat the previous question at the end of this debate, I will offer an amendment to the rule to ensure that disaster victims get the help they need. My amendment will allow Representative Dingell to offer a motion to strike the unacceptable House language and substitute the bipartisan Senate approach.

Since 2004, American taxpayers have spent over \$3.4 billion on infrastructure in Afghanistan, and even more in Iraq. Not a single one of these \$3.4 billion dollars was held hostage to political games. Yet now, as many Americans are struggling to rebuild and get their lives back to normal, the Republican Majority refuses to help unless they are allowed to defund a successful program that they happen to dislike.

The record could not be clearer. Because the Republican Majority decided that pursuing a partisan agenda was more important than meeting the basic needs of our country, we now face the prospect of a trillion dollar, thousand-page bill in order to keep our government running- simply because the other side refuses to stop playing politics and start governing as the American people expect them to do. Their failure is a disservice to the American people, an abdication of their responsibilities as legislators, and a shame to the expectations, responsibilities and duties of the House.

The Republican Majority rode into Washington vowing to change the ways of the past, yet over the last 9 months the American people have witnessed a case study in abandoned responsibilities and misguided priorities. Until the Republican Majority begins to govern with responsibility I fear this Congress will continue to live up to the low regard our nation has for it. I

urge my colleagues on the other side to stop serving their political interests, and start serving our country.

In closing, I urge my colleagues to vote no on today's rule and the underlying legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.